

The Chief of Defence Force, LTGEN Tim Keating presents the Person of the Year Award to LTCOL Childs.



COURAGEOUS LEADER TAKES DEFENCE FORCE'S TOP ACCOLADE

Dedication to the New Zealand Defence Force's core values of courage, commitment and comradeship has earned Lieutenant Colonel Melanie Childs, the New Zealand Defence Force's Person of the Year award.

The Chief of the Defence Force Lieutenant General Tim Keating described LTCOL Childs, the Commander 2nd Combat

Service Support Battalion of the NZ Army, as a courageous leader who shows the way in everything she does.

"LTCOL Child's physical courage was recognised in 2017 with the award of a Defence Meritorious Service Medal for her resolve and leadership while working at the United Nations Headquarters in Juba, South Sudan.

"Over a five-day period in July 2016 the UN Headquarters was caught in a crossfire when heavy fire broke out between rival rebel groups using mortars, machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. LTCOL Childs took charge of infantry and police units that were in disarray, and helped shepherd thousands of displaced refugees who had been living in camps around the UN base, to areas that offered them greater protection," said LTGEN Keating.

LTGEN Keating said LTCOL Child's moral courage had been highlighted, and she had shown resolve in challenging inappropriate behaviours within the Defence Force, making it a better and safer place for everyone. LTCOL Childs is also

Chairperson of the Linton Community Board, where she co-ordinates activities such as deployed families dinners, Linton family days, and other community activities.

"LTCOL Childs is always willing to share her knowledge with others, recently lecturing at the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana. She also finds the time and energy to compete at the highest levels in triathlon and in April 2017 she won a silver medal for her age group at the World Masters Games."

LTCOL Childs said it was extremely humbling for her service to be recognised.

In selecting the Person of the Year, the judges considered to what extent the individual exemplified all of the NZDF's core values and how they lived these in their daily role. The contribution had to be over and above that expected in their position and the recipient had to stand out as role model for others.



LTCOL Childs with children in South Sudan.



Chief of Army, Major General Peter Kelly (third from left) with (from left) Soldier of the Year SGT Jonathan Bailey, Volunteer of the Year PTE Nicole Harrison, NZDF Person of the Year LTCOL Mel Childs, NZDF Innovator of the Year SSGT Nathan Marsh, and Reservist of the Year PTE Caleb Butcher.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



Army medic PTE Nicole Harrison can't help it — she just loves helping people.

That desire to give people a hand when they need it — right across the community — has earned her the title of 2017 NZDF Volunteer of the Year.

PTE Harrison is based at Linton, and lives in Bulls with her husband who is in the Air Force. She has been in the Army for six years. When she is not at work with the Army she is a volunteer ambulance driver and paramedic with St John in the Rangitikei area.

And when she isn't doing that she is a volunteer rural firefighter, often fighting fires alongside her husband who is also a volunteer firefighter.

PTE Harrison, 24 and hailing from Taupo, loves ambulance work. "I really enjoy helping people if I can. Especially if they are sick or hurt or worried. It's good to help so that people don't feel so alone."

She enjoys healthcare, but her own health hasn't been the best over the last couple of years. She sprained her ankle and has had numerous procedures in an effort to be painfree. She has opted for a change of career now, and is on resettlement leave before beginning her nursing training.

She'll keep up with her voluntary work though, including baking for an organisation called Kind Hearts Baking, which delivers cakes and biscuits to parents and caregivers supporting their children at Palmerston North Hospital.

"I love baking. I make something different each week and try a few out on my husband to make sure they taste ok, and then give the rest to Kind Hearts Baking for distribution."



INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

After years as a tankie, both as a LAV operator and as an Armoured Tactics Instructor at Combat School, Staff Sergeant Nathan Marsh saw a problem.

The gap between "dry" or no ammunition training and live operations was huge, with dry training being unrealistic and presenting tactical problems for commanders.

So he set about producing something that would remedy that situation. His innovation has earned him the NZDF Innovation of the Year Award.

SSGT Marsh is an instructor at Army's Combat School, Mounted Operations Wing, and trains Armoured Combat Specialists and Commanders for the Royal New Zealand Armoured Corps.

Most NZLAV training is conducted under dry firing conditions SSGT Marsh identified there was no way of simulating ammunition notionally used during this training and there was an opportunity to create a solution that would provide this data.

He created a Dry Fire Counter to be developed and installed in the NZLAVs. This would allow crews to accurately track ammunition use, as well as a 'reload' button that would lock the counter system for a period of time to simulate reloading ammunition.

The concept went through several design stages and prototypes were trialled. Essentially the dry fire counter is a small tool added into the LAV turret and it counts each time its trigger is pulled. SSGT Marsh worked with DLEM and an external company to create a counter that best suited RNZAC needs. This counter was trialled on the LAV Crew Commander's Course and the Armoured Troop Leaders Course to ensure it was fit for purpose.

SSGT Marsh's solution allows LAV crews to further enhance their shooting training and techniques by providing a way to as close as possible simulate a real scenario in terms of timing and ammunition used.

A long-time member of QAMR SSGT Marsh says he loves his time as an instructor just as much as when he was in the turret.

"I just thought that things could be done a bit better. We need realism in our training, and this bridges the gap between dry training and live ops."

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- Do they display care, empathy and compassion when the situation dictates?
- Do they seek to mentor, coach and help other Soldiers around them?
- What do they do that is extra; over and above the norm?

A soldier that exemplifies the standards above creates an environment where excellence is achieved. Our soldiers look to work in a positive environment where role models will mentor and coach them, and where in turn they can mentor and coach those around them.

Recognising our People

Recognition is important not only for the SOTY but everyday in our units. It keeps the competitive spirit alive within Units and across Army. Seeing the SOTY receive a commendation, wear distinguishable badges, patches and have their trophy being on display in their Unit serves as a challenge for other soldiers to strive for. Let's take a look at what the SOTY receives:

- The recipient's details are added to the SOTY honours board which lives in the office of SMA.
- The SOTY trophy is displayed for a twelve month period in the recipients Unit The recipient receives a miniature version to keep.
- A CA's commendation and citation.
- A CA's coin/box and SMA Manaia.
- NZ Army Insignia to be worn on all forms of dress for the year.
- Internal and external media training and coverage.
- The recipient is the NZ Army nomination for the NZDF person of the year.
- A sponsored learning package.
- A tour of duty to an appropriate overseas event or visit.
- Sponsored attendance at designated events as guest of CA/SMA.

Whilst you could say the winner takes it all, that's not the case. The remaining finalists receive the CA's coin and an SMA coin box. They are also considered to accompany the CA/SMA to activities both at home and abroad.

I challenge all our soldiers to aspire to be the best they can be. For our Units across Army, it's a tough selection process; the talent we have is so incredibly exciting and diverse. The challenge that Units face is to determine what it is that your soldier has achieved or displayed that will give them the competitive edge.

To our soldiers, be all that you can be. To our units, look out for those soldiers who are stepping up at work and after hours. SOTY 2018 is underway.

'Standing on the shoulder of giants' – now is your time.



SAFETY FIRST — SGT BERRY AN EXEMPLAR

Using his own initiative SGT Kevin Berry has made a number of considerable safety improvements to his unit's work spaces.

He has a personal commitment to excellence and that shines through his day to day work so much so he has won the NZDF Safety Person of the Year Award.

SGT Berry received the award for his initiative and drive in improving safety for his unit. In his role as the Ammunition Sergeant for his unit he has improved ammunition processes, and also updated safety signage around the munitions facility.

The improvements he has made include: addressing the limited visibility on the gravel roads leading to the ESH (explosive storehouse), implementing a safer entry/exit radio procedure for individuals accessing the facility; coordinating with facilities management to resurface the uneven floor of the ESH; constructing a separate repack shed to enable ammunition to be safely repacked outside of the ESH facility; reviewing and reducing the explosive content being stored; welding doors shut to prevent access to the disused ESH facilities; creating a safe walking path by re-gravelling and installing a retaining wall.

These are just some of the improvements SGT Berry has initiated, many of them implemented through his own hard work in his own time. He has also completed external papers in Workplace Health and Safety, and volunteered to be the Q Store health and safety representative.

His unit strongly supports his nomination: "[His] commitment to excellence in this area is a strong reflection of him as a person and professional and is an accurate reflection of [our] ethos and values. We are proud of his efforts."

SGT Berry says he is humbled to receive the award. "I love my job and enjoy making changes in my workplace to improve safety and efficiency."